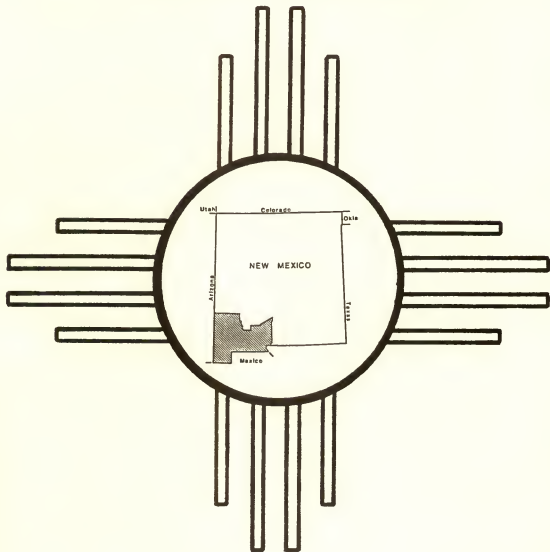


# MIMBRES RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

## FOLLOW-UP SCOPING REPORT



Bureau of Land Management  
Las Cruces District  
Mimbres Resource Area

November 1989

# 20858148  
1088018159



## United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
LAS CRUCES DISTRICT OFFICE  
1800 Marquess St.  
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

HD  
243  
.116  
11553  
1989

Dear Reader:

Enclosed for your review is the follow-up Scoping Report for the Mimbres Resource Management Plan (RMP). A total of 55 written comments were received on the initial Scoping Report. Numerous oral comments were also received at five public scoping meetings which were conducted in July, 1989. This follow-up report contains revisions to the preliminary issues, management concerns, and planning criteria based upon public review and comment.

I would like to thank each of you who took the time to review and comment on the initial scoping report. I realize that it is difficult to provide specific comments at this early stage in the process when there are no specific proposals for you to react to. Your comments were useful, however, in helping us to refine the issues, management concerns, and planning criteria which will establish changes in management direction within the Mimbres Resource Area. A number of reviewers did provide specific proposals related to the issues or management concerns.

Although we are not yet at the stage in the planning process where we can incorporate these specific proposals, we will retain them for future reference. The planning team will consider these when preparing the Management Situation Analysis (MSA) and Management Alternatives.

We will continue to keep you informed through periodic information letters as we progress with the planning schedule. Again, I appreciate your participation in the planning process. If you have any questions, please contact Scott Florence, Team Leader, at (505) 525-8228.

Sincerely,

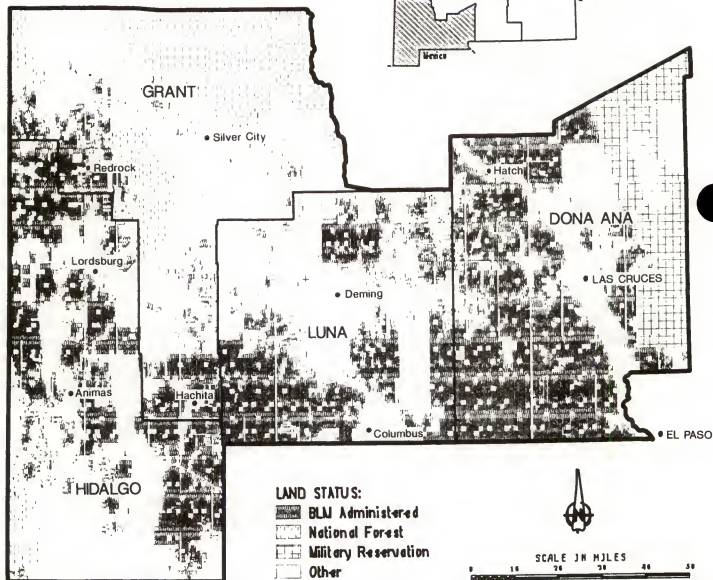
  
H. James Fox  
District Manager

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT LIBRARY  
Denver, Colorado



88018159

# **MAP 1** **Mimbres Resource Area**

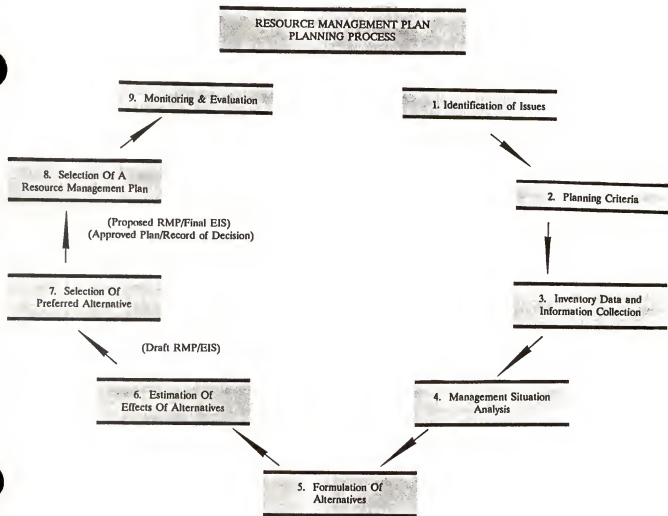


# RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN PROCESS

The planning process followed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is a result of the planning requirements in Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and final rulemaking adopted on July 5, 1983 (43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1600). The Resource Management Plan (RMP) is made up of nine basic steps. These steps are listed below.

An interdisciplinary planning team has been formed representing the range of resource uses and values in the planning area. The team has now completed identification of issues, management concerns, and planning criteria with assistance from the public through the scoping process. The team has

also been very involved in the collection of resource inventory data and other information. In the past, most of this information was stored in various paper files. It is often lost, or at best, difficult to retrieve and analyze in combination with other information. The BLM is presently building a fully automated data base using state-of-the-art Geographic Information System (GIS) technology. The data base will consist of about 40 digital data themes that can be combined and manipulated to portray different combinations and allocations of resources. This information will be very useful in the development of the Management Situation Analysis and Alternatives (Steps 4 and 5). These will be the next steps to be completed in the planning process.



## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement is essential to the success of the RMP. Although information is welcome at any time, there are five specific mandated opportunities for comment, participation, or review throughout the planning process.

1. General notice of the intent to prepare an RMP.
2. Notice inviting comment on the planning issues and criteria (we have just completed this stage in the planning process).
3. Publication of the Draft RMP and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This is scheduled for June 1991.

4. Publication of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. This is scheduled for February 1992.

5. Publication of the Record of Decision and Approved RMP, including any significant change in the plan as a result of an action on a protest. This is scheduled for September 1992.

Regulation provides that only those persons who participated in the planning process may protest a proposed RMP and that those protests are limited to specific issues which were commented on at the time.

## OBJECTIVE OF PLANNING

The main objective of planning is to guide the decision making process. BLM hopes to improve land use decisions through involvement of the public and other government agencies using the best available data and a thorough analysis of alternatives. A well-prepared plan will help guide future management decisions, as well as subsequent and more site-specific levels of planning.

### EXISTING PLANS

As you are probably aware, the BLM places a great amount of importance on planning. Some of you were probably involved in preparation of the Gila or Southern Rio Grande Management Framework Plans (MFPs), and various plan amendments. Many decisions made in those plans are still valid. Those decisions will not need new analysis unless significant new information comes to light or a change in circumstances shows a need to re-evaluate some aspect of the old decisions. There are certain issues that have been analyzed in the past which we do not feel need to be addressed in this planning process. The decisions made to resolve these issues are still valid, and there is no need to

change them at this time. They include management of livestock and recommendations for wilderness designation.

Decisions concerning livestock grazing on the public land have also been made based upon two EISs and plan amendments. Decisions on the number and type of livestock as well as levels of forage allocation and utilization have already been made and will not be addressed in this RMP. Further refinement of grazing practices will be considered in specific areas as a means to resolve other issues or concerns.

For the past 10 years, BLM has been reviewing the public land in New Mexico to determine which areas should be recommended for addition to the National Wilderness Preservation System. This process is now complete, therefore the wilderness suitability of public land previously studied will not be re-evaluated. An exception to this position is where, due to recent land exchanges, BLM has acquired tracts of land that were never considered for wilderness. The suitability of these areas will be examined through the planning process.

Map 2 indicates the status of existing MFPs and plan amendments. As you can see, there is still portions of the Resource Area not covered by a land use plan. The RMP will

supersede these existing plans, incorporating the valid parts and providing a single, comprehensive plan for the Mimbres Resource Area.

## ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

Issue identification is the first step in the planning process. Issues are considered to be significant problems, concerns, or opportunities which eventually lead to a change in existing management direction. Issues can be identified by the public, other Federal agencies, State and local governments, Indian tribes, and BLM managers. After all tentative issues have been identified, the District Manager selects the topics to be addressed as issues in the RMP process. These issues will become the center or focal point of the plan.

### PLANNING ISSUES

- o Represent significant decisions that must be made
- o Are controversial (problems or opportunities) and demand management attention
- o Raise choices - for every issue there are alternative management responses
- o Are within BLM authority and jurisdiction
- o Lead to an action, i.e., protection, designation, or special management

- o Do not pertain to a subject already resolved in a previous plan or EIS unless new information shows that the previous decision is no longer accurate
- o Apply to most or all of the resource area; i.e., are not so site-specific as to be more appropriate for an activity plan

### MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

While issues provide the focal point for development of the plan, there are many other concerns that may not be controversial or have alternative choices for resolution. An example of the latter would be cultural resources or endangered species which, by law and policy, must be protected. Resolution of management concerns, like issues, involves changes in existing management direction but these changes may not vary among alternatives.

The BLM's Supplemental Program Guidance (SPG) was developed to ensure that certain minimum resource determinations are made in every RMP, regardless of whether a particular resource is an issue. Most of these determinations will be addressed as management concerns. The final SPG was approved on November 14, 1986 after a review period which involved extensive public input.

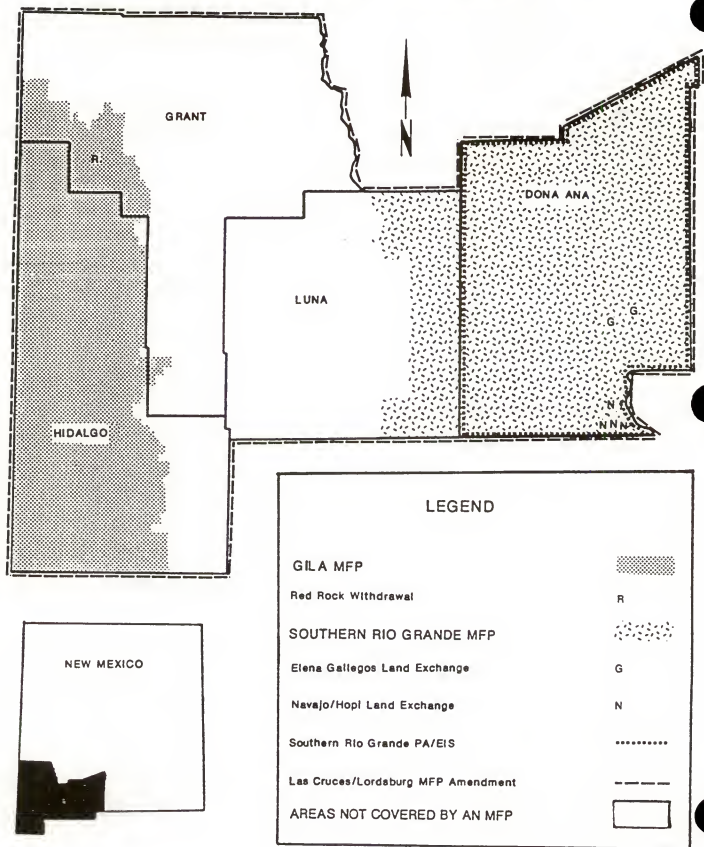
## PLANNING CRITERIA

Planning criteria are the factors BLM will evaluate to develop answers (decisions) to the issues and management concerns. Planning criteria direct the preparation of the RMP, establishing limits on the analysis that is needed to resolve the issues and concerns. This will determine how the planning team will approach the development of alternatives and ultimately, selection of a preferred

alternative. Planning criteria consist of non-discretionary and discretionary criteria. Examples of non-discretionary criteria are various applicable laws (such as FLPMA and the Endangered Species Act), regulations, policies, and Executive Orders. Discretionary criteria are contained in the following sections which describe the issues and management concerns.

# Mimbres Resource Area

## Valid MFPs and Plan Amendments



# JURISDICTION AND STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Some issues were not included because they are outside BLM's jurisdiction, are covered by previous plans, or can be better handled through day-to-day standard operating procedures.

The RMP cannot address items which are outside the authority or control of BLM. Examples of this include grazing fees, water rights, or other issues that are set by laws or regulations or controlled by other agencies or levels of government.

When a person or group files a site-specific request to use public land, the BLM's

response is guided by the existing land use plans as well as law, policy, and regulation. For example, if an individual files a right-of-way application for a small water line, the proposed site is routinely examined for the presence of cultural resources and threatened or endangered species. If the project is approved, standard stipulations are included to protect the public land and any special resources identified during the application review process. Consequently, the BLM can better respond to this type of request on a case-by-case basis, rather than through the RMP.

## PRELIMINARY ISSUES, MANAGEMENT CONCERNS, AND PLANNING CRITERIA

The following issues, management concerns, and planning criteria are based upon input from the planning team and the public, through the recent scoping process. These issues and concerns represent resource or program areas where the Bureau anticipates changes in management direction within the Mimbres Resource Area as a result of the RMP process. The issues and concerns are not arranged in any order of priority.

---

### Issue 1: Land Ownership Adjustments

---

The Southern Rio Grande Plan Amendment (SRGPA) identified land to be retained in public ownership as well as land to be acquired for the multiple-use value in Dona Ana County. It is anticipated that most of these decisions will be carried forward with modifications as needed to reflect changing priorities and concerns. Land use decisions for the rest of the planning area are either non-existent or too general to be of any use.

The land ownership pattern in Luna, Grant, and Hidalgo counties includes significant amounts of State trust and private lands. The challenge will be to work with the State Land Commission, private landowners, and the public to develop land use decisions that will accomplish mutually acceptable goals.

### Needed Decisions

- o Which lands should BLM acquire (by exchange, purchase, or donation) to consolidate its land pattern and to enhance multiple-use programs?
- o Which lands should BLM retain in public ownership?
- o Which lands should BLM dispose of and why?

### Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed questions identified above, BLM will consider:

- o Multiple-use values (whether or not significant or unique values exist)



- o Land and resource management efficiency
- o Service to the public (i.e., meeting community needs, etc.)
- o Public interest and attitudes
- o Existing land uses
- o Surrounding land ownership pattern
- o Adjacent land uses
- o Need for public and administrative access
- o Federal Land Policy and Management Act, Section 203 sale criteria
  - parcels difficult and uneconomic to manage
  - purpose of a previous acquisition is no longer required
  - disposal of a parcel will serve important public purposes
- o Social and economic effects
- o Effects on other resources and uses
- o The degree to which changes in ownership will promote consolidation of public land without creating a scattered land pattern or split-estate
- o public health and safety

## Issue 2: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) and Other Special Management Areas

The public land in the Mimbres Resource Area has a variety of important historic, cultural, scenic, and natural values. Examples of important natural values would include significant riparian areas and habitat for threatened or endangered plant or animal species. ACEC designations may be used to provide special management attention in order to protect these values. They may also

be used to identify and manage areas that are hazardous to human life and property. ACECs will receive priority consideration for funding and implementation.

Other types of special management may also be used to protect important resource values. These include wild and scenic rivers, national scenic and recreational trails, back country (scenic) byways, and wilderness areas. In 1982, the National Park Service completed a nationwide inventory of free-flowing rivers. From that inventory, they concluded that the Gila River deserved consideration as a wild and scenic river. It is BLM's responsibility to study the Gila to determine its suitability for designation as a wild, scenic, or recreational river. Only Congress, however, can designate a wild and scenic river.

The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST) has been designated by Congress. Congress established a scenic corridor of 50 miles on either side of the Continental Divide, with the actual trail location to be proposed and designated through the planning of the respective land managing agency. The CDNST may be a marked route as opposed to a constructed trail.

With the completion of several State trust and private land exchanges in the Organ and Peloncillo Mountains, BLM consolidated Federal holdings in these areas. These lands may have wilderness values and wilderness management could protect important resource values. The BLM plans to inventory these areas within the next year. If they meet the criteria for wilderness study, they will receive further consideration in the RMP. Again, only Congress can designate a wilderness.

Past planning decisions concerning special management designations will be carried forward unless additional information requires further analysis.

### Needed Decisions

- o Which public land should be designated as biological, cultural, scenic or natural hazard ACECs and how should they be managed (the RMP must clearly identify management objectives for each area and

what restrictions if any apply to other uses?

- o Are portions of the Gila River (BLM-administered public land in the Gila Lower Box between Redrock and Virden, New Mexico and the Gila Middle Box upstream from Redrock, New Mexico) suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System? How should they be managed?
- o Which routes should be considered as possible locations for the CDNST? Which route should be ultimately designated?
- o Is land in the Peloncillo Mountains (between the Coronado National Forest and Antelope Pass) suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System?
- o Is land in the Organ Mountains (between Soledad Canyon and Pena Blanca) suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System?
- o Which public land should be identified for other forms of special management (scenic or backcountry byways, etc.) and how should it be managed?

### Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed decisions identified above, BLM will consider:

- o Resource values
- o Manageability of an area to preserve its resource values
- o Existing ACEC, wilderness, and wild and scenic river representation
- o Current and potential land uses
- o Effects of designation on other resources and uses
- o Effects of non-designation on resource values

- o Social and economic effects
- o Public interest and attitudes
- o Consistency of designation with resource plans of other Federal, State, and local governments and Indian tribes
- o Consultation with Federal, State and local agencies, the scientific community, and individuals
- o Long-term (more than 20 years) versus short-term (less than 20 years) benefits
- o Management concerns along the U.S./Mexico border
- o Public health and safety

---

### Issue 3: Vehicle Management

---

Vehicle use in the Mimbres Resource Area has increased in the last few years. The majority of the use is related to other forms of motorized recreation, primarily hunting. However, the use of motorcycles, "quadtracs: and "three-wheelers" is also increasing. Vehicle use is also incidental to other resource uses such as mining and ranching. Much of Dona Ana County is less than an hour's drive from Las Cruces, New Mexico and El Paso, Texas where large populations of users reside. Even the smaller communities of Deming, Silver City, and Lordsburg, New Mexico have many public land users. Most of the public land in the planning area, except for the Wilderness Study Areas is undesignated. This is leading to increased conflicts with other public land users, adjacent landowners, and significant resource values. The designation of public land will affect all public land users, not just recreationists.

### Needed Decisions

- o What public land should be designated as

open, limited, or closed to motorized vehicle use?

- o What areas should be managed for intensive off-road vehicle (ORV) use?
- o Within restricted areas, how should vehicle use for authorized activities (other than recreational) be accommodated?

### Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed decisions identified above, BLM will consider:

- o Level of existing use and location of areas currently being used by ORVs
- o Demand for additional ORV opportunities
- o Types of ORVs being used
- o Effects of ORV use on other resources and uses
- o Effects of ORV restrictions or closures on other resources
- o Effects of ORV designations on other uses such as livestock management, law enforcement, and mineral exploration and development
- o BLM administrative needs
- o Public interest and attitudes
- o Manageability of an area to accomplish the objectives of a designation
- o Management concerns along the U.S./Mexico border
- o Public health and safety
- o Social and economic effects

### Issue 4: Access

There are large blocks of BLM-administered public land in the planning area that do not

have legal public access. In many cases, small privately owned or State-owned parcels control access to large blocks of BLM-administered public land. There is increasing demand from the public to obtain legal or physical public access to these areas. At the same time, conflicts with permittees and adjacent landowners (due to vandalism and trespass) continue to be a problem. Subdivision and development of adjacent private land and private inholdings are also causing increasing conflicts and will further limit opportunities to obtain access through easement acquisition or exchange. Access problems also prevent or hamper effective administration of public land.

### Needed Decisions

- o Where should BLM provide access to or across public land and what type of access is needed?
- o What actions should BLM take to provide access to or across public land?
- o How should BLM coordinate with other land and resource management agencies to ensure access to State, National Forest, and public lands?

### Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed decisions identified above, BLM will consider:

- o Extent of public land and the size of public land parcels
- o Resource values
- o Availability and type of existing access
- o Public needs and preferences for access
- o Agency administrative needs for access
- o Coordination with State and local governments and other Federal agencies
- o Effects of the availability of access on existing resources and uses
- o Compatibility with adjoining land uses

- o How the public land is being used and managed
- o Management concerns along the U.S./Mexico border
- o Public health and safety
- o Social and economic effects
- o Effects on adjacent private landowners
- o Potential for development of access through consolidation of public land or development of alternative routes, followed by negotiated easement acquisition, and as a last resort, condemnation.
- o Service to the public
- o Resource values and uses
- o Adjacent land uses
- o Compatibility with other utility rights-of-way
- o Presence of existing corridors and rights-of-way (and confining new rights-of-ways to existing corridors and sites to the extent possible).
- o Social and economic effects
- o Effects on the resources and uses

#### Management Concern 1: Rights-of-Way

Public land is used for a variety of purposes, including powerlines, oil pipelines, and telecommunication sites. Authorization of these activities takes careful planning to ensure that significant adverse impacts to other resource values and uses do not occur.

#### Needed Decisions

- o Which public land should be designated for right-of-way corridors, avoidance areas, and exclusion areas?
- o What terms and conditions should be applied to right-of-way grants for corridors and sites and for use outside corridors and sites?
- o Which existing public land transportation and utility corridors should not be designated as a right-of-way corridor upon plan approval?

#### Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed questions identified above, BLM will consider:

#### Management Concern 2: Minerals

The Mimbres Resource Area encompasses one of the more mineralized areas in the United States. There are thousands of mining claims that have been located for base and precious minerals. Mineral exploration and development are important activities that must be encouraged and undertaken with special care and consideration for other resources. BLM has the authority to regulate mining operations to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the environment. BLM also has the authority to include stipulations with mineral leases to avoid or mitigate impacts to important resource values.

The Las Cruces/Lordsburg MFP Amendment of 1984 established special stipulations for energy mineral exploration and development throughout the Resource Area. Special stipulations include seasonal restrictions, no surface occupancy, etc. It also identified areas that are not open to leasing. These decisions will be reviewed and carried forward as appropriate in the RMP. Special attention will be given to compliance with new Supplemental Program Guidance. It is anticipated that there will be little change in these decisions.

Mineral material disposal constitutes a major workload, particularly in Dona Ana County. Areas along Interstate 10 and in the vicinity of Deming, Lordsburg, and Silver City, New Mexico are also in demand. Implementation of a competitive sale program for mineral materials would promote a more orderly and cost effective program. On the other hand, it is likely to squeeze out the smaller operators who operate on lower profit margins.

### Needed Decisions

- o Which public land should be open to the operation of the mining laws? Which should be closed?
- o What terms, conditions, or special stipulations should be applied to public land open to the operation of the mining laws?
- o Which public land should be open to mineral material (sand and gravel, for instance) disposal? Which should be closed?
- o What terms, conditions, or special stipulations should be applied to public land open to mineral material disposal activities?
- o Which public land should be considered for competitive mineral material sales?

### Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed decisions identified above, BLM will consider:

- o Effects of mineral exploration and development on other resources and uses
- o Mineral potential and the probability of a discovery
- o Demand for mineral resources
- o Lands available for mineral production
- o Effects of environmental protection stipulations on claimants, lessees, and permittees

- o Success of protective stipulations in accomplishing objectives
- o Effects on the mineral industry of closing lands
- o Public health and safety
- o Social and economic effects

### Management Concern 3: Recreation

Use of the public land for recreation continues to increase as urban areas in the Southwest grow. Demand for developed recreation sites and open space can be partially satisfied through recreation use of the public land. Recreation opportunities also contribute to tourism in New Mexico, benefitting the economies of communities, counties, and the State.

### Needed Decisions

- o Which public land should be managed with emphasis on outdoor recreation opportunities?
- o What recreation setting should be maintained and what activities should BLM provide for?
- o What recreation management strategies should be developed and what actions should BLM take to maintain established recreation settings?
- o What activity planning priorities should BLM establish for the Resource Area?
- o Which public land should be identified and managed for interpretation of natural resources and public education?

### Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed decisions identified above, BLM will consider:

- o Existing recreation uses, use areas, and facilities
- o Public demand for additional recreation activities, settings, and experiences
- o Compatibility with adjacent land uses and resources
- o Effects of recreation uses on other resources and uses
- o Public health and safety
- o Planned or projected recreation developments
- o Public interest and attitudes
- o Potential for interpretation of resource management objectives
- o Social and economic effects

#### Management Concern 4: Cultural and Paleontological Resources

Cultural and paleontological resources are an important link to our past. Although many archeological sites have been degraded by weathering and pothunting (it is estimated that over 90 percent of all Mimbres culture sites have been destroyed), much of what remains is capable of yielding important information. Important and unique paleontological resources also exist on public land, including the recently discovered Paleozoic Trackways. As such, cultural and paleontological resources are of great concern to BLM. BLM manages cultural and paleontological resources for their scientific, historical, interpretive, educational, recreational, and intrinsic value. The RMP represents an opportunity to set specific objectives for management of cultural and paleontological resources.

#### Needed Decisions

- o What management objectives should BLM establish for cultural and paleontological resources in the Resource Area?
- o What actions should BLM take to achieve these objectives (such as preparation and implementation of cultural resource management plans and designation of ACECs or other Special Management Areas)?

#### Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed decisions identified above, BLM will consider:

- o Relative importance and sensitivity of known and anticipated cultural and paleontological resources
- o Geographic distribution and density of cultural and paleontological resources
- o Feasibility of attaining cultural and paleontological resource management objectives
- o Need or desirability of cultural and paleontological resource management objectives
- o Threats to cultural and paleontological resources
- o Public interest and attitudes
- o Effects of cultural and paleontological resource management on other resources and uses
- o Compatibility with adjacent land uses
- o Social and economic effects

#### Management Concern 5: Wildlife Habitat

Public land in the Mimbres Resource Area provides habitat for a variety of wildlife

species. Other uses of the public land can be damaging to wildlife habitat if not properly managed. Special attention is needed to restore, maintain, or enhance priority species and habitats. Integration of habitat management with other resource programs requires careful planning to minimize impacts to these species and habitats while still providing for other uses of the public land.

### Needed Decisions

- o What wildlife species and habitats should receive management priority? What maintenance, improvement, and expansion objectives should BLM establish for these species and habitats?
- o Which priority areas need Habitat Management Plans?
- o What actions should BLM take to achieve the objectives for priority species and habitats?
- o What wildlife population goals should be established, considering existing and anticipated habitat capacity?
- o What monitoring objectives should BLM establish for priority habitat?
- o Where, with what methods, and at what times of the year should animal damage (predator) control activities be authorized?

### Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed decisions identified above, BLM will consider:

- o Existing Habitat Management Plans
- o Input from Federal and State wildlife agencies and the scientific community
- o Species and habitats of high public or scientific interest

- o Extent of species and habitats including current range, key areas, and potential habitat
- o Species population goals
- o Forage allocation
- o Species habitat requirements
- o Vegetation communities and habitat condition
- o Effects of other resource uses
- o Social and economic effects
- o Presence of exotic species and conflicts between exotic and native species
- o Maintenance or enhancement of biological diversity

### Management Concern 6: Soil, Air, and Water

Many erosion control structures were built on public land by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s and 1940s. Much more work needs to be done to prevent minor drainages from becoming major arroyos. Many existing structures also need maintenance.

Under the Clean Air Act, public land was given Class II air quality status. This classification allows for moderate deterioration of air quality associated with moderate, well-controlled industrial and population growth. Some activities that take place on public land may have impacts on air quality, but the activities must comply with the Clean Air Act standards.

In the dry environment of the desert Southwest, water is often the limiting factor to use of the public land. It supports the

biological resources of the region and the people who use the land. Maintenance of water quality and quantity is critical to the well being of the environment, the public, and many of BLM's programs.

### Needed Decisions

- o What objectives should BLM establish for watershed management and control of soil erosion?
- o What management objectives should BLM establish for maintenance of air quality in the Resource Area?
- o What actions should BLM take to achieve these objectives (such as preparation and implementation of watershed management plans)?
- o What water quality objectives should BLM establish for the Resource Area and what actions should be taken to achieve those objectives?
- o Where should BLM focus its efforts to secure instream flows for riparian, wildlife, and recreation purposes (if such a provision ever exists under New Mexico State law)?

### Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed decisions identified above, BLM will consider:

- o Soil type
- o Effectiveness of existing erosion control structures and the need for additional structures
- o Extent of saline/alkali soils
- o Watershed condition in areas of saline/alkali soils
- o Methods to reduce runoff and erosion
- o Current and potential land uses

- o Air quality standards of the Clean Air Act (as amended, 1977)
- o Air quality standards of the State of New Mexico
- o Current and future land uses that may affect air quality
- o Values and uses of water resources
- o Demand for additional use of water resources
- o Water quality and trend
- o Watershed condition and trend
- o Watershed productivity potential
- o Manageability of the water resources
- o Other resource uses of water resources
- o State of New Mexico and Federal water quality standards
- o Social and economic effects

### Management Concern 7: Vegetation

Vegetation is an integral part of all ecosystems. How BLM manages that resource will affect the health of the environment. Careful consideration needs to be given to how BLM should manage vegetation resources, including maintenance or establishment of desired vegetation. Certain land treatment methods, such as chemical brush control, were previously analyzed in the Las Cruces/Lordsburg MFP Amendment and Southern Rio Grande MFP. It is not anticipated that there will be major changes in these decisions.

### Needed Decisions

- o On which public land should BLM establish vegetation sale areas for native plants and firewood?



- o What management objectives should BLM develop for maintenance or re-establishment of desired plant communities and what actions should be taken to achieve those objectives?
- o On which public land should land treatments (vegetation manipulation) be used to protect, restore, establish, or enhance vegetation species? What types of treatments should BLM use (root plow, herbicides, prescribed fire, etc.)?

### Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed decisions identified above, BLM will consider:

- o Available access and demand
- o Effects on other resources
- o Social and economic effects
- o Areas that require increased vegetation cover to reduce soil erosion, increase livestock forage, and improve wildlife habitat
- o Suitability of natural vs. artificial revegetation techniques
- o Use of land treatments to maintain or improve plant communities
- o Current and potential land uses
- o Presence of T&E plants
- o Input from the scientific community
- o Potential for location of vegetation sale areas in land disposal areas and mineral material sale areas
- o Condition and trend of native plant communities
- o Maintenance or enhancement of biological diversity
- o Presence of exotic species and conflicts between exotic species and native species

### Management Concern 8: Riparian and Arroyo Habitat Areas

Riparian areas are defined as an area of land directly influenced by permanent water. They have visible vegetation or physical characteristics reflective of permanent water influence. Spring areas and streambanks are typical riparian areas. Ephemeral streams or washes that do not exhibit the presence of vegetation dependent upon free water in the soil are excluded.

Riparian areas are extremely limited in size and extent throughout the desert Southwest. As such they are unique and extremely important, not only for many species of wildlife that are dependent on them, but also for maintenance of water quality, spring and stream flow, and forage production. Many of these small areas are in a degraded condition. Special management is needed to maintain or restore these important areas.

Arroyo habitats associated with the many dry washes throughout the Resource Area are not considered riparian areas by definition. However, because of their unique and diverse vegetation which often occurs in stark contrast to surrounding desert areas, they are considered important areas which may require special management attention.

### Needed Decisions

- o Which riparian and arroyo habitat areas should be designated as ACECs or receive other special management designations?
- o What management prescriptions are needed to protect or restore riparian and arroyo habitat areas in the Mimbres Resource Area?
- o Where should BLM focus its efforts to secure instream flows for maintenance of riparian habitat (should this become a possibility)?

### Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed decisions identified above, BLM will consider:

- o Condition and trend of riparian and arroyo habitat vegetation
- o Resource values
- o Current and potential land uses
- o Effects on other resources and uses
- o Social and economic effects
- o Potential for improvement
- o Watershed condition and trend

### **Management Concern 9: Threatened or Endangered Species (T&E)**

There are currently 97 species of plants and 56 species of animals of special concern that occur or have the potential to occur in the Mimbres Resource Area. These plants or animals are either State or Federally-listed, Federal candidates for review, or State sensitive species. BLM's responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act are to ensure that Federal actions do not jeopardize the continued existence of a T&E species or its habitat. In addition, BLM cooperates with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in efforts to recover listed species that occur on public land (which will ultimately help to remove

them from the list of Threatened or Endangered species). BLM policies also provide that management consideration be given to Federal candidate species to ensure that these species do not become listed. Finally, BLM cooperates with the State of New Mexico to ensure that consideration is given to State listed or State sensitive species.

### Needed Decisions

- o What management objectives should BLM establish for protection and enhancement of plant or animal T&E species?
- o What actions should BLM take to improve habitat conditions, aid in recovery efforts, and resolve resource conflicts for listed, proposed and candidate T&E species?

### Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed decisions identified above, BLM will consider:

- o Input from Federal and State wildlife agencies and the scientific community
- o Extent of species habitat, including current range, key areas, and potential habitat
- o Species population goals and habitat requirements
- o Effects of other resource uses
- o Social and economic effects
- o Conflicts with other uses
- o Recovery plan goals and objectives and the potential to aid in recovery efforts

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

1800 Marquess Street

Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
INT415



792

DSC LIBRARY  
BLDG 50 DENVER SERVICE CTR  
DENVER, CO 80225